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1 May 1990
5:00 AM

PENTAGON PAPERS II: WHAT ELSE I COPIED

At 4:02 AM on the night of April 30-May 1--the 15th anniversary of the ending of the Vietnam War and the entry of the NLF/NVA into Saigon--I woke up with the thought:

On the Twentieth Anniversary of the publishing of the Pentagon Papers: I could publish the missing parts of the papers I copied, the parts that never got out, including the parts that got "lost in the hurricane."

Moreover, I could publish a book that would tell the story surrounding those parts: the part of my life that dealt with nuclear planning, first-use threats and "inadvertent war," both before and after the Pentagon Papers, including my earlier, mostly unsuccessful efforts to get all this to public attention and to create an antinuclear movement.

This would also cover: Why Nixon really tried to stop me. Why HAK thought I was "the most dangerous man in America," why the Plumbers were really set on me, what they wanted to keep me from telling: Nixon's secret nuclear threats to Vietnam (and his real policy to end, and win, the war. His--my--"Madman Theory."

After all, I had always believed that--in the absence of the actual documents, many of which had been lost--this story needed a booster to launch it into adequate public attention, comparable to Nixon's injunctions against the Pentagon Papers and his indictment of me.

That is why I wanted it to come out as a Congressional hearing (which could subpoena witnesses), or as a news story (which, again, could draw on the testimony of other sources). It is why I first told parts of the story as a witness on trial, under oath, at Rocky Flats; and later courted indictment, by releasing Halperin's Taiwan Straits Crisis study in Japan.

Why have I waited twenty years to tell these things? I haven't! The myriad efforts I've made to get this news out in the above forms are part of this story, along with the uniform failure to break through into major media (which means the contents of the revelations are still news, with respect to the American public and the mass media).

The notion that I woke up with, a little over an hour ago, was that the Twentieth Anniversary observances next June could be the launching pad for these revelations. They may not take off at all--

-certainly, not like the first batch--but this occasion would give them the best chance for attention they could have had in years.

Moreover, this is a project that is doable in a year: unlike my overall autobiography, or even the primary tale of the copying and distribution of the Pentagon Papers and what led up to it, which deserves to be more artfully written.

I've always thought that my autobiography had to be two books, because of length and the way the story split in two, half dealing with Vietnam and the decision to release the Papers, half dealing with my concern with nuclear war and what I had learned about it. To do justice to both parts in one book would make it too long, especially if I included the actual documents and information on nuclear matters that had never been released, and gave this the analytical treatment it deserved.

If there were to be two books, the "nuclear" one should come first, I always thought (rightly or wrongly: most people--except for Randy Kehler, in November 1969!--disagreed, though without really knowing what I had to say on nuclear matters). It was more urgent, of greater long-run significance and of immediate relevance to the anti-nuclear movement and to possible legislative action and arms control policymaking.

Whether or not I was wrong to delay now, the same arguments were strong for putting this out now, rather than later. Bush will probably enter into START II negotiations this year, but reluctantly, and with the content not yet determined. He is almost sure to do so without a real sense of urgency: which is just what could be conveyed by these revelations, which all bear upon the persistent question: What has been, what remains, the real risk of nuclear war in the nuclear era?

Recall my draft statement for Congressional hearings on these subjects, never held: "I believe that secrecy on nuclear matters has threatened the survival of civilization."

(Thought of these unheld hearings reminds me of the whole story of the theft of my documents in 1974, their transfer to House Government Operations, and the aborted plans for hearings on them. Thus--virtually the whole file of what I have to say has been in Government hands since 1974, though the public hasn't gotten the message.)

The whole Cuban Missile Crisis story is, potentially, part of this account (though much of the relevant new data, and the interpretations and hypotheses reflecting them, was not available to me before the last few years). Recently it occurred to me that the continuing relevance of this episode--despite the ending of the Cold War and the decline in the short-run risk of nuclear war--is the warning it poses of the risks of proliferation (and of

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continued high levels of "modernized" weapons in the hands of the superpowers), given the recklessness it reveals "even" in superpower leaders.

But this same lesson follows from the whole body of information I have to reveal. That was always the meaning of that information, that experience, for me, and why I thought it must come out, even though, initially, I expected it to put me in jail for life, if the first batch of the Pentagon Papers, the Vietnam part, didn't do that first.

Thus, whether or not I should have written all this sooner, it will never again be more timely to reveal these data than the coming year. It may give both superpower negotiations and antinuclear movements in other states a kick in the right direction just when it is most needed. If it doesn't, no later release would have had better prospects. Either way, I can then at last proceed to Book II, how Vietnam and the struggle to understand and end it changed me and how the Pentagon Papers were released.

There are two aspects to Book I (many parts of which could come out first, or simultaneously, as articles): the contents of the information to be released, including documents, and my interpretation of them; and the story of my efforts to get the information to the public, including movement activities and civil disobedience.

Part I: The Unreleased Data

--The Delegation of Presidential Authority to Use Nuclear Weapons. Deception about this during 1964 campaign.

--The nature of the JSCP and the SIOP.

--The general problem of unauthorized action. The situation at Kunsan. (And my initial memo on authentication and unauthorized action: and the possibility of a PAL. See my D on Command and Control). Accidents and unauthorized action (see Sagan's interest).

--War Plans: GEOP, NATO, JSCP.

--In particular: the emphasis on preemption; the first-use/first-strike likelihood; actual expectations as to the likelihood of precipitating incidents (e.g., uprising in East Germany); allout nature; "alternative undertakings";

--Actual deployment of nuclear weapons in Japan: Iwakuni. (Subsequent confirmation of this. Implications for Japan Security Treaty; inferences as to why no action by McNamara).

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(All the above were covered in my January 1960 briefing to Bundy, reflected in his memo to JFK given to me by Sagan).

--My memos on the Emergency Action Message, "actual consequences of release"; on NATO planning; etc. [Try to get these from RAND, via FOIA: a test case of use of FOIA for a contractor?!]

--The nuclear references censored out of the Pentagon Papers, and out of the published negotiations volumes.

--My draft of the Basic National Security Policy, the basis of SecDef guidance for the JSCP 63 and, it appears, for later Carter/Reagan planning. My accompanying memos for this. (Note that no documents on this planning have yet been released under FOIA).

--My draft of the Deputy SecDef "questions" on the JSCP and the story of their non-response. (Talk to Gilpatric about this).

--My (JFK) question to the JCS on fatalities in the SU and China, and their response.

--Draft of McNamara message to SAC, Power, on new options for SIOP.

--Later notes on modified JSCPs, and new BNSP.

--Material in my 1971 briefing to Charlie Nesson, on patterns of secrecy in USG.

--Whole file on Cuban Missile Crisis: transcripts, notes: including:

--Nitze's personal notes on ExComm (never released to historians--see Trachtenberg note: Nitze told Blight and Welch he had lost them!), and my interview with him, and with Yarmolinsky, bearing on his and McNamara's and Rusk's initial reaction ("We would have to eat them.")

--Whole story of PSALM clearance; Cline interview. Effects of "lying in State, ." on JFK's own surprise by the missiles. Indications of JFK option of concealing evidence on the missiles till the election; and how this bore on Khrushchev's possible plan to control the risks of his project, and hence on his timing (both otherwise till now unexplained).

--hsr study in August: early concern about the possibility of missiles.

--Mongoose documents: though newly released in 1989, link to me via Lansdale! And via "plumbers"! Relation to "provocation

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planning" known to me in connection with Tonkin Gulf incidents in 1964! (And see briefing to me by CIA in 1961, and my reaction: "This is all good fun, but what is the point of it? Where does it lead?"

--McN memo (never released) of October 2 on occasions for implementing invasion or attack plans.

--My own experience in Crisis, including Rostow briefings, and my own memos.

--Turkish missiles! What JFK really had ordered, what he and McN feared...what I worked on Saturday night. Added to recent revelations on JFK and McN expectations as to how the crisis would be resolved, this bears on what JFK's real strategy was, and how much his actions involved bluffs (neither of which has ever been imagined in published analyses).

--The incident on the night of October 26, 1962: what I learned, what I drew from it...and subsequent revelations on this and on Cuban antiaircraft and inferences...How the Crisis could actually have exploded in its last 24 hours, despite the personal willingness of both leaders to settle without war.

--My whole theory, and manuscript, on "Faits Malaccomplis." (See new data by Goldgeier).

--Hypotheses on risk-taking by leaders, reflecting Kahneman-Tversky findings: bringing in data on LBJ in 1965 (and the Challenger, and other cases of Constructing a Catastrophe).

--My experience with plans for invasion of Cuba in 1961, and my visit to Guantanamo. The actual costs and risks of possible war in Cuba, as seen from the perspective of Vietnam (and Panama).

--Notes on Rowen's and Nitze's actual expectations of the odds on nuclear war (Nitze: 1 in 10):

--Khrushchev-JFK letters, including the still-misinterpreted October 26 letter. (These have now been released, yet the latter crucial letter is still almost universally misdescribed, reflecting the initial misleading paraphrases of it. The actual lack of clear contradiction between the "Friday night" and "Saturday morning" letters has never been recognized).

--My interview with RFK 1964, on two ultimatums (and, e.g., on whether Dobrinin had "lost his usefulness").

--The actual deceptions by Soviet officials: Did they "lie"? Why not? Why the emphasis on this by American officials?

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--Notes from my 1964 Crisis Study, including, in addition to Cuba material above:

--Minutes of Vienna Conference, 1961, and Paris Conference 1960 (bearing on U-2; plus interviews with Bissell).

--WSEG Critical Incidents Studies, including Laos Study and Tonkin Gulf Study.

--Halperin's Taiwan Straits Study, including nuclear parts still censored.

--State Department study of Berlin Crisis.

--Notes on Suez crisis.

--Documents on Vietnam, drafted for Kissinger in 1968-69:

--NSSM-1.

--Summary of responses on NSSM-1.

--Options Paper (never released!)

--Try to get on FOIA the Kissinger NSSMs on nuclear matters from my RAND safe.

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